

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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*Public-Private Partnership to Help Restore State Park*

## **Cuyamaca Rancho State Park to Rise from Ashes In Earth Day Activities**

**Call the Cuyamaca Earth Day Hotline at (760) 765-0623 and say, Yes, I care and I want to help restore Cuyamaca Rancho State Park.**

Earth Day 2004 will have special meaning when it is celebrated April 24 and hundreds of volunteers are expected to gather at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park to help restore this popular state park that has been closed since last year's devastating fires that swept Southern California.

"There is a lot of work to do, but hundreds of people have been calling with offers to help," said Superintendent Laura Itogawa. "We would like to reopen the park as soon as possible, but State funds and resources are limited. We are counting on volunteer assistance to get the job done."

That will come April 24 when a public-private coalition of State Park managers and citizen volunteers roll up their sleeves and pitch in to do what a bad budget year prevents -- work together to restore and help reopen a fire damaged State Park.

"Earth Day was established in 1970 as a way to call attention to environmental stewardship and the ecological challenges facing our planet," said State Parks Director Ruth Coleman. "This will be a day when we all can do something that will have a positive impact on the preservation and protection of our park lands. It will be especially meaningful at Cuyamaca."

All but 300 acres of the 26,000-acre Cuyamaca Rancho State Park were destroyed in the fires that struck Southern California last October. The deadly fires destroyed more than 20 historic structures and most of the campground facilities. The park has been closed since then. Because of the state's well-documented budget problems, funding for the work that is needed immediately to reopen the park as soon as possible is very limited.

"We're asking our volunteers to help restore the park's visitor use facilities, as well as trail work and fence building," said Ranger Michele Green who is coordinating the project. "But the day will be also lots of fun," she added. "We have a wide variety of projects planned throughout the park and volunteers will be divided into teams according to their skills."

**Green said it is very important that volunteers who are interested in participating call ahead to register. A special Cuyamaca Earth Day hotline has been established at (760) 765-0623.**

Volunteers will gather at the Cuyamaca Outdoor School at 8 a.m. Green said work will take place during the morning and early afternoon, with crews returning for a wrap-up in mid-afternoon. She encouraged volunteers to wear sturdy shoes and work clothes, including gloves. Volunteers should also wear hats and sunscreen and carry plenty of water and snacks.

The California State Parks Foundation has awarded \$500,000 in grants to private groups and government agencies over the last six years to complete Earth Day projects. This year the Foundation has awarded a \$2,000 grant to the Cuyamaca project, an amount that was matched by co-sponsors the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Interpretive Association, and the Anza-Borrego Institute. The Cuyamaca Rancho Foundation is also co-sponsoring the event.

Starbucks Coffee, Naked Juice, Einstein Bagels and the California Pizza Kitchen have offered to provide snacks for the volunteers at this special event.

About 450,000 people visit the park each year. It is located about 40 miles east of San Diego on Highway 79, about eight miles north of I-8.

### **Important Information**

**WHO: Volunteers who want to help restore a State Park**

**WHAT: Earth Day 2004**

**WHEN: Saturday, April 24, beginning at 8 a.m.**

**WHERE: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, Cuyamaca Outdoor School**

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